

Segun Mike Eman:
**Pueblo ta
 respondiendo
 grandemente
 ariba e
 mensahe di
 speranza y
 optimismo di
 Plan Aruba**



ORANJESTAD (AAN)—Durante e conferencia di prensa semanal di e partido berde, mr. Mike Eman a expresa palabranan di gratitud na comunidad di Aruba cu ta respondiendo en grande ariba e mensahe di speranza y optimismo di un plan pa e futuro di e pais aki, cual ta Plan Aruba, a bisa, cu AVP a bin ta presentando den e temponan aki. Eman a señala cu Diadomingo dos siman pasa, AVP tabata tin un congreso sumamente grandi y den fin di siman, nan a habri un oficina nobo na Piedra Plaat, banda di Hooiberg, caminda e comunidad a responde den miles ariba e yamado di nan partido pa conhuntamente forma un forza grandi pa trece un cambio dia 23 di September. Na prome lugar, e lider di AVP a gradici nos pueblo cu ta respondiendo grandemente ariba e mensahe di partido AVP, pero na otro banda, tambe a felicita e candidatonan di e partido (Eli Kock, Robert Maduro, John v/d Biezen, Eddie Croes, Norma Roos, Andy Lee) cu bao guia y iniciativa di Othmar Oduber a habri e centro nobo aki pa traha ariba e cambionan cu pueblo ta desea.

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Natalee Holloway would have been a One Day Story... if her name was Lateefah

By: Steve Yuhas

Michael Jackson was found not guilty, Scott Peterson is on death row, there is no "missing" bride to be and Nancy Grace doesn't have much to talk (or cry) about so it was wonderful when the story of a missing American in Aruba fell right into cable news show laps. The problem with the coverage that 18-year-old Natalee Holloway's "disappearance" is generating is not that it is being covered, after all it is a story when a person goes missing, but it has been at the top of virtually every newscast for almost a month and even I (normally not a skeptical race carder) am wondering if Natalee was named Lateefah (African for gentle or pleasant) if the cable news world would be fixated on her disappearance.

Holloway went missing on May 30th, it is now almost the end of June and still her disappearance is leading the news as if President Bush did not announce he will visit Vietnam, the Congress remains embattled over nominations, American cities are on the verge of bankruptcy and that there is something particularly special about Natalee Holloway. In what should have been a one or two day story where nothing new has been learned, except that the black men taken into custody initially have been released and no charges were conferred against them, the media is fixated on Natalee Holloway and Joran van der Sloot - a 17-year-old being held along with three others in Aruba.

Van der Sloot is the son of an Aruban judge so a judge from a neighboring island, Curacao, was assigned to a case that is quickly growing out of control. Justice officials in Aruba say it is not unusual that in high profile cases that judges come from neighboring islands to assist local judges and keeping Van der Sloot in custody will give police time to either rule him out or create a case against him. Holloway, from Alabama, went to Aruba, a safe island that boasted only one murder in all of 2004, to celebrate her graduation from high school with 124 classmates and 40 chaperones (ok 7, but sarcasm never hurt - either way - where were they during all this). News appearances by her family suggest that Holloway is the epitome of virtue and that whatever befell her had to be the work of sinister forces, but one has to wonder - why Aruba?

As stores sell out of yellow ribbons in her hometown and FBI agents and all of the resources of the Aruban government (including the Prime Minister of the Dutch colony, Nelson Oduber, who told a television audience that finding Holloway was the "number one goal" of the island) are focused on finding the US citizen questions concerning what Holloway was doing the night she presumably vanished have to be asked. It is not enough for Nancy Grace to cry every night (watch the show - she does - oh and yells) or for Greta Van Susteren to take up residence in Aruba to cover the story - no we need more so every night for the last month no news means a full hour of talking about the same thing over and over again.

This is what we know: Natalee Holloway was visiting Aruba, she was staying at the Holiday Inn and on the night before she was to return to the United States she went to a Boyz II Men concert at Surfside beach, stayed until closing time (1:00am) at a bar called Carlos 'N Charlie's and was wearing a blue-and-green striped, low-cut blouse, denim miniskirt and sandals. That's it - that is all we know yet every cable network has not only followed the story, but updates us every hour on the hour with no news to report and reporters are now making the peaceful and safe island of Aruba out to be something akin to visiting Mexico without sufficient bribe money for police officers.

Holloway is consistently described by news outlets as a "teenager" as if she was not of legal age or she had just received her driver's permit. It is true that she is eighteen, but in Aruba that is old enough to get into bars and clubs and drink the night away (witnesses say that Holloway was drinking the night she disappeared and throughout her stay); Holloway is a missing person, a grown woman, and the idea that this case has become so blown out of proportion baffles me. There is nothing significant about it insofar as a grown woman is missing, there are tons of them all over the United States and the world, but for some reason the blonde hair and consistent statements of her family that she was a "good girl" and her disappearing is "out of character" for her continue to get air play. Now her parents want to sue because they're not getting everything they want from the Aruban authorities - well crimes happen!

Arubans should be commended for being one of the safest places in the world - donuts to dollars crime is lower in Aruba than in Holloway's hometown or closest large city.

I'm not so naïve not to understand that when the news is slow and when your fame and fortune depends on major, high profile cases falling into your lap so that your angry and vitriolic tone can help boost ratings for CNN that you don't jump at the chance to cover and cry over a story (read: Nancy Grace), but for Greta Van Susteren to cover the case with such vigor is overkill for someone who typically balances out the sensational with the standard and mundane, yet important, legal issues of the day. Something has to explain what it is about Holloway that makes her disappearance so special and the disappearance of so many people that are just normal every day people that they make the headlines so often.

There is no other explanation for the coverage of Natalee Holloway's disappearance from Aruba and the continuous coverage of it other than the fact that she is a pretty white girl who presumably went missing in Aruba at the hands of the son of a judge. Had Natalee been black and had she went missing in Jamaica, I hardly think that Nancy or Greta would be crying (well Nancy would cry because that is what makes Nancy Grace who she is) or taking up residence there. We've seen this story play out too many times for me not to believe that there is something about how a presumed victim looks that drives the coverage and that is a sad admission for me to make.

Holloway is a grown woman who went to Aruba because she wanted to have a good time, yes there were chaperones, but where were they when she was in a bar drinking with folks she may have known only for a few days or a week? Where were the chaperones when night fell and the bars closed knowing that she had a plane to catch the next morning to check on her to make sure she was okay? The chaperone to student ratio during her trip was better than the guest to staff rate at a five star hotel - surely someone should have noticed that she was not there. More importantly though: why did Holloway leave, as witnesses have accounted many times, in a car with people if she was the virtuous girl that she was when the bar closed when she should have gone to bed?

Outside of the question of race: how come when the Holloway's talk or supporters talk about the Alabama contingent and the "children" they were and their inability to control themselves and how vulnerable they were they use words like "child," "children," or "kids," meanwhile, the accused, who is 17, is a "man" or "young man?" Either Holloway was a child at 18 and therefore it follows that the accused is as well since he was a year her junior or she is an adult. Since the Holloway's have made it clear that the "man" who is accused of doing the unthinkable is a mature adult, then so too is their daughter and she is at least partly responsible for whatever happened to her. A hard pill to swallow, but the Holloway's cannot have it both ways and the media should not allow it.

If Van der Sloot is a man, a mature adult accused of complicity in the disappearance of Holloway, then she is a woman and this colossal over-reaction that will kill the tourist industry of one of the safest places on earth and cost many people their jobs is a sham. Not to mention the fact that stories coming out of Aruba talk about the Alabama contingent as less than being as pure as the driven snow.

These are questions that the news simply won't ask a grieving family looking for their loved one, but someone has to start asking why this story is getting so much attention. Holloway is a grown woman who may have left Aruba on her own accord or may have been the victim of foul play - either way the story is old and tiresome and it almost makes me miss the days of slow speed helicopter coverage of the Michael Jackson convoy arriving at court or the Peterson jury deliberation clock that appeared when the jury was in session.

I'm not a race baiter and not someone who typically looks for trends concerning race, beauty or victim-hood, but in this case there is no other explanation for the amount of coverage Natalee Holloway received for not making her plane back to Alabama from Aruba. I hate to say it, but there may be something to the notion that it pays to have white skin when it comes to disappearing because I don't know the face of a single missing black or brown person, but I know plenty of white ones and the one I have seen for nearly every day for a full month has been Natalee Holloway.

I hope they find out what happened to her, if anything, and that she returns home safely, but if that is not the case I find myself hoping that one day I'll recognize a missing black woman when she disappears and hear her mother's pleas for a safe return in the same volume as I've heard for a grown woman from Alabama.

I realize this column is going to anger some - I've already received the emails and believe me I feel for the family, but the criticism is about behavior of the family (threatening to sue one of the safest places on earth), the missing woman's friends (for waving good-bye as she got into the car of men she did not know) and the media for focusing on this woman as if she is the only person missing on earth. There is a pattern about missing people and cases covered and call me whatever you want, but I don't recall a lot of attention paid to missing people of color - I am a conservative and hardly a player of the race card, but I call a spade a spade and when every person on television who is a victim is white and the victims who are not have no coverage or a mere blip, some people notice.

I did and wrote about it - it is what I do as an opinion writer and radio host. If you don't like the opinion - you should have stopped listening before you got here.

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